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REIGNING IT IN…

MISS BENTON HARBOR IS 2024 MISS BLOSSOMTIME; MR. ST. JOSEPH IS 2024 MR. BLOSSOMTIME

— PAGES 10-13 —

PHOTO OF THE 2024 MISS BLOSSOMTIME COURT BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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Chikaming Township Board approves Cherry Beach parking fee structure

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the Chikaming Township Board of Trustees amended Ordinance 126 relative to parking to establish a fee structure for parking at Cherry Beach for this upcoming summer season at their Thursday, April 11, meeting.

The amendment will establish a fee structure that consists of a $15 daily fee for visitors to the beach and $20 for a seasonal parking pass for Chikaming Township property owners and with the township issuing up to two seasonal parking passes per property owner.

In February, Joe Martin, director of parks and recreation at Chikaming Township, said that a Cherry Beach Ambassador Advisory Committee, which consists of members Sue Phelan, Brian Kern and Carolyn Drier, was in agreement that a kiosk and fee structure should be recommended for Cherry Beach to the board.

The centrally located kiosk would be a plate reader. After a license plate number is punched in, the kiosk would spit out a receipt to be placed in a windshield. The seasonal pass for residents would need to be affixed to a windshield.

"We're excited about this opportunity and what it presents itself in controlling the overcrowding and some of the mayhem that occurred last year at Cherry Beach," Martin said in February.

Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte said that amending the ordinance was required for the township to have police power to ticket those who are not in compliance.

A resolution allowing for a request for the renewal of the township's 1.9 mils public safety millage, which will expire late this year, to be on the Aug. 8 ballot was adopted.

Bunte said that, after meeting with clerk Paula Dudiak, fire chief Allen Weich and police chief Todd Taylor on the current status of the funding for public safety for the fire and police departments and increased costs, it was decided that the township could try to maintain the costs and "stay level" by renewing it.

The amount, which was approved by the voters four years ago, has been reduced slightly with the Headlee rollback.

Board members approved two amendments to the zoning ordinance with regards to residential districts in the waterfront district and the definition of porches.

Bunte said that the amendments are with regards to the changes in the residential district in the waterfront district from R-W to R-1 that were erroneously added to that district, as they don't connect into the lake, as well as the definition of porches in Section 2 under Article 4 of the ordinance.

At the last meeting, Bunte said that, when the township redid its zoning ordinance and created the waterfront district, some parcels erroneously got connected to waterfront parcels as waterfront properties.

Another committee will research other ideas with nonconforming lots (NCRs) in the ordinance and bring them back to the board at a later date. Bunte added that there were lots of issues, specifically with removing the option for a half story on the township's NCR lots, the potential of increasing lot coverage and square footage and rear setback issues that were also discussed.

Board members approved projects with increased costs for work on Lakewood and Harbert roads.

Bunte said he'd received the updated costs on the projects from the Berrien Road Department that week. Harbert Road's project from Three Oaks Road to Flynn Road, which was bid out last year, will be a little over its estimated cost of $615,000 and Lakewood, which was estimated at $50,000, will be $84,236.

The annual reappointment of Allen Weich, fire chief, to the Medic One Board was approved.

Board members approved Weich's request for the fire department to explore purchasing a storage container. Weich said that not only could the container be used to store equipment not used on a regular basis, it could also be used for training purposes, such as practicing throwing up ladders against it as opposed to the department metal sheeted building.

Board members approved an SLU for 6900 Youngren Road to transform a detached garage to an accessory dwelling unit and a land division request to split one large lot into two.

The most valuable thing on earth?
The Soul.
— Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJESKI, JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday October thru March at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN, JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

City council approves vacating portions of city streets for proposed lodging, event center

BY THERESE DONNELLY

Members of the New Buffalo City Council approved requests to vacate portions of platted city streets to make way for a planned lodging and event center Monday, April 15.

In March, the council heard from the owners of Petite Acres. LLC, who requested the city vacate Rose Street between Buffalo and Clay streets, and East Michigan and Virginia streets between Bell Ave and the Rose Street right-of-way.

Before voting, councilmember Mark Robertson confirmed with the owners all requirements for hotel status rather than short-term rentals will be met.

Mayor John Humphrey said he wanted plans to include a second exit point, stating there is currently only an exit onto Bell, which would potentially bring heavy traffic to the residential street. He also pointed out emergency services could have trouble entering.

A recent hydrographic survey showed the city harbor needs to be dredged. Watson told the council the mild winter and low lake levels had allowed sand to accumulate. He also said there was a "heavy deadline," as no dredging will be allowed during spawning season from May 15 to June 30.

The council approved a $33,500 contract with Abonmarche to provide project services and coordinate with dredgers. No dredging company has been selected, though Mike Morphey of Abonmarche said several had expressed an interest.

As work progresses on the transient marina upgrades, the first change order has been approved. Watson said when outdated pedestals were removed, workers discovered a void beneath the sidewalk. After reviewing possible solutions, the contractors recommended a slurry fill at a cost of $17,106. Morphey said soil was eroded over time and the issue was not detected sooner because the reinforced sidewalk did not sag or bulge.

The council also appointed Watson to serve as the city's representative to the Medic 1 Board of Trustees.

The council tabled a decision on purchasing new picnic tables for the pavilion at Oselka Park. Watson reported the current tables are damaged and have reached the end of their usefulness. Penshura, LLC, the same company that manufactured the park's current tables, has quoted $30,170 for replacement tables. Councilmember Brian Flanagan said the pavilion repairs should be completed before getting new tables. Watson said the tables could be stored until the work is done.

Before going into closed session to discuss Watson's contract, Humphrey raised the topic of off-season visitors at the public beach. While the city does not staff the beach until Memorial Day Weekend, Humphrey said he had witnessed many people walking the breakwater, climbing the dunes and operating four-wheelers in the beach parking lot. All of these activities are prohibited at the beach. Humphrey said there was a need for additional staff to monitor the beach before the summer begins. Watson noted it would be difficult to hire someone for such a brief period, especially since activity at the beach is weather-dependent. Watson announced the city had received a letter from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services recognizing the city's water department for water quality. He also announced city clerk Amy Fidler had recently achieved Michigan Professional Municipal Clerk certification from the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks.

After a closed session meeting, the council reconvened and approved a contract renewal for Watson.

Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence.
— Leonardo da Vinci

Village council approves ordinance amendment regarding sidewalk improvements

BY THERESE DONNELLY

Sidewalk improvements throughout the Village of Three Oaks may be smoother now that the village council has approved an ordinance amendment that will allow the village to contribute funds towards improvements.

Under the new amendment, if costs to replace or repair a section of sidewalk exceed $500, the council has the authority to allocate funds to pay for a portion of the work. It will require a two-thirds majority vote from the council to allow any payments.

Also at their Wednesday, April 10, meeting, the council approved a new ordinance to allow golf carts on village streets. Under the ordinance, carts are not permitted on sidewalks and cannot operate on streets during inclement weather, or when snow or ice cover the road.

The council then approved a resolution to set a golf cart registration fee at $100 for a two-year permit. Failure to register or renew may result in a fine.

On the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the council approved an amendment to the village ordinance to clarify signs and murals.

Tap-in fees will cost more after the council approved a rate increase that brings the charge from $1800 to $3000, plus additional fees.

Village manager Dan Faulkner reported the spring discharge at the wastewater treatment facility has been completed with no issues. He said a second discharge is planned for the month of May, depending on spring weather.

Recent tests revealed an elevated level of manganese in the village water. Faulkner asked the council's approval to obtain permits for new filters, which requires approval from the state's Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) department.

Faulkner said that manganese levels did not reach unsafe levels, but the village would post notices as manganese in drinking water has been linked with health issues, especially in infants drinking formula, and transparency was important.

Mac Elliot, 10th District county commissioner who is running for reelection, reported the commissioners are working on expanding high-speed broadband service throughout the county. Work is also underway to establish an emergency response center near Buchanan.

The council discussed work on the roof at Watkins Park from hail and wind damage. Faulkner said the village's insurer had already issued a $10,000 check and selected a vendor to perform the work. In reviewing the provided estimate, the council noted total costs were expected to exceed $40,000. They tabled the matter until the May meeting, while Faulkner determines what the insurance is paying.

The council discussed work on the roof at Watkins Park from hail and wind damage. Faulkner said the village's insurer had already issued a $10,000 check and selected a vendor to perform the work. In reviewing the provided estimate, the council noted total costs were expected to exceed $40,000. They tabled the matter until the May meeting, while Faulkner determines what the insurance is paying.

Two requests for marihuana licenses came before the council. Farnan Farms' application for a business license for 7200 W. U.S. 12 received approval contingent upon proof of a site plan approved by the Planning Commission. The council tabled a decision on a request from Green Koi for a provisioning enter and retail business license for 6934 W. U.S. 12.

The council also approved a request from property owner Rober Hixon to rezone his parcel at 23 W. Ash from R-1 Single Family Residential to C-1 General Commercial.

In an anonymous vote, the council hired Tracy Jones as Village Treasurer.

Faulkner informed the council that attorney Matt Derby, who has served as legal council for village in matters relating to marijuana licensing, is leaving the firm of Kotz, Sangster, Wysocki. Faulkner said the village may decide to continue working with the firm, request its files, or have Derby continue to work with the village from his new firm. Faulkner said Derby will be representing Harbor Country Collective, which has a marijuana retail location in Three Oaks, at his new firm. In light of this, the council voted to request the files and consider new attorneys.

The council accepted the resignation of Bryan Volstorf from the Downtown Development Authority and appointed Ann Hart and Jim Dygas to the empty seats on the DDA. Village president Richard Smith said Hart and her husband own 6. Linden, and Dygas will soon open a coffee shop in the downtown.

The council also appointed Keith Claunch to serve on the Planning Commission.

TOWN SQUARE

LETTERS TO THE *NEW BUFFALO TIMES*:

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JOIN HANDS...

As our community reflects on the viewing of the solar eclipse, we are writing to rally our collective spirit for a cause.

In the spirit of sharing, we are initiating a drive to collect solar eclipse glasses for donation to Astronomers Without Borders. This global organization works tirelessly to ensure that individuals around the world, regardless of their resources or geographic location, have access to the transformative experience of witnessing celestial events safely.

By participating in this endeavor, each member of our community has the opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of others. Your donation of solar eclipse glasses will not only provide individuals with the means to observe the eclipse safely but also spark curiosity, foster a sense of unity, and inspire a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of our world. Please drop off your donated solar eclipse glasses at the New Buffalo Elementary Office, the New Buffalo Middle School Office, the New Buffalo High School Office, or the New Buffalo Township Library. Let's join hands and ensure that everyone, everywhere, can experience the awe-inspiring beauty of the universe.

— MARY COOPER LISA KNOLL
NEW BUFFALO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Final resolution adopted regarding U.S. 12 Water and Sewer Extension SAD

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the New Buffalo Township Board adopted the fourth and final resolution for the U.S 12 Water and Sewer Extension Special Assessment District at their Monday, April 15, meeting.

A public hearing was held before the adoption of the resolution, which sets the assessment roll, during which residents could object to the amount of the assessments.

The township had held a public hearing regarding the project itself last October.

Paul Harvey, an engineer with Wightman and Associates, said that the project involves providing fire protection and extending sanitary sewer along U.S. 12 between Interstate 94 and Hoder Road. The project scope involves a water main being installed on both the north and south sides of U.S. 12.

In March, Harvey said the project was bid "with the inclusion of contingency, engineering and council fees and all other costs." The total amount to be bonded is $1.75 million. The assessment for fire protection and sanitary sewer service was based on the following: 75 percent of that total cost was assessed on a per parcel basis and the remaining 25 percent was assessed on land area.

In March, Harvey said the project was bid "with the inclusion of contingency, engineering and council fees and all other costs." The total amount to be bonded is $1.75 million. The assessment for fire protection and sanitary sewer service was based on the following: 75 percent of that total cost was assessed on a per parcel basis and the remaining 25 percent was assessed on land area.

A couple options to assist with funding the assessment are the USDA Section 504 loan and a state law that "will allow the township to define hardship and potentially defer or adjust the assessments based on that definition," Harvey said.

New Buffalo Township Supervisor Michelle Heit said that the township had received three objections to the project in writing.

Board members also adopted a bond resolution, which authorizes the issuance of special assessment bonds for the district.

Board members adopted a resolution that states the necessity of a traffic light to be located along U.S. 12 near the railroad crossing to the villages of Grand Beach and Michiana.

Heit said the villages are concerned about the influx of traffic that may arise from the Marquette Greenway and the marijuana dispensaries that are going up there. The resolution will be sent to the township's state representative and senator, MDOT and the county commissioner and road department.

A pool fill policy and agreement was adopted. Fire chief Jamie Flick said that the township has received several requests over the years for them to do pool fills again. He said that it was great training for the new members of the fire department, especially for pump operations, and that every house that goes in seems to have a new pool.

Flick said that pool fills will only be done for township residents, and that either the resident or the pool company needs to be present the entire time.

The amended outdoor assembly ordinance and related application and a resolution that sets the fee for and number of outdoor assembly permits to two per any calendar date were approved.

A preliminary approval of an SLU for Mitten State Engineering to operate an adult-use marihuana retail establishment at 18350 U.S. 12 and a preliminary approval of an SLU for Larry Hanna, EMS Holdings, LLC, to operate one at 19333 M-239 were approved.

Final approvals of SLUs were given to CSAB Green, LLC, to operate an adult-use marihuana retail establishment at 11253 M-239 and for JARS Ventures 12 LLC to operate one at 19799 U.S. 12.

Final approval for an SLU to Farmette, LLC, to install a small 10-by-24-foot lean to greenhouse for vegetable, herb and flower propagation on the west side of the building located at 18439 U.S. 12.

A step increase for the utility supervisor to $85,000 for his annual salary was approved.

A bond payment of $230,625 from the public safety fund for the public safety building bond payment at U.S. 12 was approved.

A quote from Ferguson Waterwork for $8,638 for a utility locator for the water department was approved.

A municipal grant application to The Pokagon Fund for $400,000 for a veteran's park on Clay Street and U.S. 12 and $10,000 for the school supply giveaway at Public Safety Day was approved.

An addendum to the Pleasure Isle office space lease agreement with Outdoor One, Inc., which amends the term of the lease from two years to three, with an increase of 6 percent for the second and third term each, was approved.

The purchase of a Ford Explorer for an amount not to exceed $41,000 from Seiman's Ford for code enforcement was approved.

New Buffalo Times
LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
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Brave first responders reach driver in crash

BY STAN MADDUX

The threat of electrocution didn't stop emergency responders from getting a Three Oaks woman to safety after she struck a utility pole with her car.

"It could have been tragic. The quick actions of the personnel present highlight how well emergency services work together throughout La Porte County," said La Porte County Police Capt. Derek Allen.

About 9 p.m. Sunday, April 14, Alyssa Sheldon, 32, rolled her 2014 Ford Fusion multiple times and struck a utility pole on Indiana 39 at 800 North.

Police said the car was heavily damaged on all four sides and left a debris field that included a muffler, wheel and part of a bumper, along with several alcoholic beverage containers.

Springfield Township Fire Chief Steve Marvel said the pole broke about one-third of the way from the top, which is unusual because the bottom usually breaks from impact in crashes.

He said the top of the pole dangling from the wires apparently led to a power surge, which caused sparks to start falling from the lines and catching the grass on fire about a half mile south of the crash site.

After being informed it would take representatives from Indiana Michigan Power Company 45 minutes to arrive and turn off the power, firefighters, despite the risk, began extricating the driver from the vehicle, police said.

"We couldn't leave her in the car. We weren't sure what kind of injuries she had," Marvel said.,

The risk for electrocution, though, became much greater after the power lines closer to them also began sparking and caught fire as the driver, who was fresh out of the car, was being secured to a stretcher, police said.

Realizing time was not on their side, all of the emergency responders grabbed the stretcher to move the driver and themselves as fast as they could to a safer location.

"They knew they needed to get moving pretty quickly," said La Porte County Emergency Medical Services Capt. Jennifer Sabie

Moments later, police said the power lines burned through and fell to the ground on top of the vehicle.

Sheldon was taken by ambulance, complaining of pain to her stomach and left arm.

Marvel said multiple people could have been electrocuted had they still been at the vehicle when the power lines dropped.

He said people inside vehicles coming into contact with power lines are usually protected as long as they stay inside because the rubber in tires keeps the current from flowing into the passenger compartment.

However, he said the ground can still be electrified and send life threatening current into anyone else standing nearby.

Sabie said the medics at the accident scene were a bit shaken up from experiencing such a close call but seemed much better the next day.

"They're doing well. I've talked with them," she said.

Sabie said that, while medics are trained on how situations can quickly change, the ones involved in the crash may not have expected it to be so sudden.

"They were worried about the situation and how fast it had escalated with the change in the power lines," she said.

Police said the driver, who was exhibiting signs of impairment, had an odor of alcohol on her breath.

Charges are pending the results of a test from a sample of blood drawn from her at Franciscan Health hospital in Michigan City to determine if she was legally intoxicated, according to police.

Chikaming Open Lands and Nature Therapy of Michiana to offer transformative forest bathing experiences

Southwest Michigan land conservancy Chikaming Open Lands (COL) has announced a new partnership with Forest Bathing Michigan | Nature Therapy of Michiana to offer a series of immersive forest bathing experiences throughout 2024.

Forest bathing, also known as Shinrin-yoku, is a therapeutic practice that involves immersing oneself in the healing power of nature. Through gentle strolling, mindfulness exercises and meditation sessions in COL's nature preserves, participants will have the opportunity to escape the stresses of modern life and connect with nature on a deeper level.

"We are excited to partner with Nature Therapy of Michiana to offer these unique and rejuvenating experiences in our beautiful natural spaces," said Grace Fredenburg, education and outreach coordinator of COL. "Now, more than ever, people are seeking ways to reconnect with nature and find inner peace, and we believe that forest bathing provides the perfect opportunity to do just that."

Led by experienced ANFT Certified Guide Karen Joy, each forest bathing session will guide participants through activities designed to awaken the senses, promote relaxation and foster a deeper connection with the natural world. From May through December, a variety of dates and times have been scheduled to accommodate different schedules and preferences.

"Everyone belongs in nature because we are nature, we are not separate from it. Our goal is to create a safe, welcoming space where individuals of all ages and abilities can experience the healing power of the forest," said Karen Joy, founder of Forest Bathing Michigan | Nature Therapy of Michiana. "Through these sessions, we guide participants to reconnect with themselves, each other, and the more than human world. The experience is scientifically proven to reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance overall well-being."

The proposed forest bathing dates and times for 2024 begin Friday, May 17, with several dates scheduled each month, through December. Each session will take place at a COL nature preserve, providing participants with a beautiful and serene setting to experience the benefits of forest bathing. Space for each session is limited, so interested individuals are encouraged to reserve their spots early. To register and learn more about forest bathing with COL and Forest Bathing Michigan | Nature Therapy of Michiana, visit www.naturetherapymi.com.

Chikaming Open Lands is the local land conservancy dedicated to preserving the open spaces and natural rural character of southern Berrien County. COL works to protect and restore native plant and animal habitat, improve water quality and permanently preserve ecologically significant forests, prairies and wetlands, as well as prime farmland and other open spaces in this area. COL serves 12 townships in southern Berrien County, and has been instrumental in preserving more than 2,000 acres of open space since its founding in 1999.

Forest Bathing Michigan | Nature Therapy of Michiana offers guided forest bathing experiences designed to promote relaxation, reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. Led by Joy, these sessions provide individuals with the opportunity to connect with nature on a deeper level and experience the healing power of the forest. — STAFF REPORTS

Residents close to proposed school housing site express concerns

BY STAN MADDUX

Plans to construct affordable workhouse housing to reverse enrollment decline was the focus of the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education at its meeting Tuesday, April 15.

Not everybody is happy about the proposed new housing judging by the responses of homeowners near the site during a public question and answer session about the proposal that was made part of the meeting at the Performing Arts Center at New Buffalo High School.

The preliminary plans call for more than 80 units inside townhomes to be constructed in phases, along with 15 traditional single family homes New Buffalo High School building trades students would help erect.

The building trades students help build one home a year.

The housing would go up across from New Buffalo Elementary School along Lubke Road on ground owned by the school district.

Among the concerns expressed by nearby residents is increased traffic posing a risk to students walking to and from school from the high number of units proposed.

Shannon Schroeder, who lives next to the school, also said the cost of the new housing would not be affordable for some members of the workforce like "a single mother working at a restaurant" or people already struggling financially.

On March 25, the school board selected Ed Gausselin of Bison Property Development and Mike Reinhold of Bradford Group to develop what's known as the Bison Preserve.

Housing would exist on about 20 percent of the over 30 acre mostly wetlands site.

The school would donate the property to the developers to help bring down the cost of construction.

Grants and other forms of contributions will also be pursued to try and bring down the expense of construction further so the housing costs fall within the price range of workers like young teachers.

Local public sector employees could be offered the homes first as they're going up in phases.

All of the townhomes would be rented, while the traditional single family homes constructed with help from building trades students would be offered for sale as they have been at other locations over the years.

Each townhome would contain about 1,800 square feet of space along with three bedrooms and a two car attached garage.

Reinhold said the amount of monthly rent has not been set because many unknowns still exist about the final cost of the potential development.

When pressed for a ballpark figure, he said rent could range from $1,800 to $2,200 a month.

Some of the 30 people in the audience gasped at the estimated price of rent, saying it's out of reach for many working school district residents with children on the verge of being priced out of the community.

Reinhold explained the idea is to attract families with children wanting to settle down long term in New Buffalo by offering high quality housing at a price they can afford.

He said one and two bedroom units affordable to lower wage earners are not the type housing that can make as much of a positive impact on student enrollment.

Reinhold said the plans, which had more housing units added in recent months, have not been finalized, though.

"Can we have a product more affordable for others? That train hasn't left the station. There's still time to change that," he said.

New Buffalo Area Schools Superintendent Adam Bowen said total enrollment has dropped from about 650 to 540 students over the past 10 years.

Former New Buffalo Schools Superintendent Mike Lindley said one hope is to tap into some of the money the state and federal governments have set aside for construction of workforce housing.

Larry Gill, who also lives near the proposed construction site, said the amount of homes planned should be reduced because it could mean the addition of 400 to 500 new residents in "a relatively small area."

"I don't think that's what anybody in that area who owns a home signed up for," he said.

According to school officials, more public question and answer sessions will be held in the coming months.

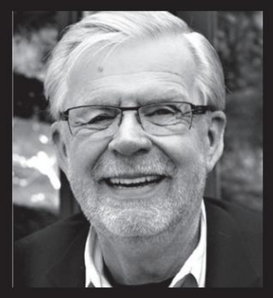
Gausselin said any final plans will have to go before the New Buffalo Township Board for approval.

He said construction could start in 2025 as long as soil sampling and everything else in what he expects to be challenging process goes smoothly.

"There are a lot of unknowns and until those unknowns are addressed, there's always room for surprises," he said.

SPORTS

From the Bleachers



COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

Orenthal James Simpson passed away on April 10th at the age of 76, thus ending the life of one of the most famous football players in history. He was one of the best running backs ever, an actor and pitchman, and it certainly would have been nice if his story ended there.

Instead, Simpson became one of the most famous murder suspects in history.

O.J. and his wife Nicole were married for seven years, from 1985 until 1992. During their time together, the police in Los Angeles were called about domestic abuse 62 times. When Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman were viciously stabbed to death outside of her condo in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles, everyone assumed that O.J. was the killer.

A preponderance of evidence pointed to him and for the 17 months between the murders and the innocent verdict, the world watched. From the low speed chase of the white Bronco until the parlor trick with the glove (if it doesn't fit, you must acquit) it seemed like weird things were happening weekly.

Simpson lost in a civil trial and owes the families of Brown and Goldman millions of dollars and later ended up spending nine years in prison for robbery. This entire saga was so complicated, with so many twists and turns, that a book could be written about it (many have been) or a television show or movie be made (again, many have been).

Since the trial, it has been discovered that many football players suffer from CTE, a condition brought on by repeated blows to the head. Unfortunately, Simpson is going to be cremated next week without donating his brain to science. A final word was given by Caitlin Jenner, a good friend of Nicole's, who said when he heard of OJ's passing, "good riddance".

Scotty Scheffler won the Masters golf tournament and his second green jacket with a four stroke win in the sports premier event. I've never visited Augusta National, but some of my friends have and claim it's magical.

Tiger Woods participated for the record-setting 24th time but wasn't a serious challenger this time. Professional golf is undergoing a difficult period as players are being pulled to an upstart group with the lure of a lot of money fighting against the traditions and prestige of the PGA. Hopefully, peace can be restored soon.

The White Sox are off to their worst start after 15 games in the club's history, winning only 2 while losing 13. The Cubs are doing better, winning 9 of 15, but their entire division is playing well and the only team they're ahead of is the St. Louis Cardinals. Being ahead of the Cards always brings me joy.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

Bison solid in disappointing road loss

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School baseball team lost in extra innings Tuesday, April 16, at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School.

The Bison (5-2) were defeated 6-5 after giving up four first inning runs.

Head Coach Adam Lijewski was encouraged, though, because he considers the Lakers one of the measuring sticks for how much his team of mostly juniors has improved from a winless 2022 season.

"I think it's going to open up the eyes of some other teams to know we're kind of starting to become one of the teams to beat," he said.

The Bison split a doubleheader on April 9 against River Valley, which is another team he's judging the progress of his players on.

Sam Wendell-Suppa struggled with his control from the mound against the Lakers, whose bats went cold against Jeff Tertel.

Tertel, a freshman, pitched five innings of shutout ball in relief.

The Bison tied the score with four runs in the fifth inning and went ahead with a run in the top of the ninth inning.

The Lakers, though, evened the score in the bottom of the inning then won the game when a balk was called on pitcher Ethan Lijewski.

The balk allowed the runner on third base to automatically cross the plate for the victory.

At the plate, Lijewski had two hits, including a double, and drove in a run.

Hagen Davis had three hits for the Bison and scored a run.

Lijewski praised Tertel, who threw over 100 pitches, and the defense along with the play of Wendell-Suppa in left field after he was replaced on the mound.

"He did really well out there," he said.

The loss followed a 10-0 and 15-5 doubleheader sweep at home for the Bison against Eau Claire on April 12.

The highlights on offense in the second game included Lijewski scoring three runs and Nick Wolfe having two hits and scoring two runs.

You can't be a PPV star if you don't put on an exciting performance. — *Gervonta Davis*

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Miss Benton Harbor is 2024 Miss Blossomtime

MR. ST. JOSEPH IS 2024 MR. BLOSSOMTIME

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Cheers rang out from both near and far in the Mendel Center at Lake Michigan College when Miss Benton Harbor Armani Collins was crowned the 91st Miss Blossomtime Monday, April 15.

Despite appearing overwhelmed from having the shiny silver crown placed atop her head, Armani didn't forget to thank her personal cheering section from somewhere in the packed auditorium.

"I just want to say thank you to everybody for supporting me throughout this whole journey," she said.

Armani also thanked her biggest supporter of all: God, for "uplifting me and encouraging me and motivating me every single day."

"I am so blessed and thankful to be Miss Blossomtime 2024," she said.

Armani's deeply rooted faith was also present in her answer to the onstage question: "Other than a physical gift, what gift would you give?"

"Prayer - because without God, you are nothing," she said.

The daughter of Jasmine Swanson and Willis Collins, 17-year-old Armani is a senior at Benton Harbor High School. There, she's an honor roll student and is a member of the student Council. She has earned varsity letters in Cheerleading and is a Jobs for Michigan Graduates Awardee and a Threads of Hope

Mr. Blossomtime contestants open the show with a dance number

The 2023 Miss Blossomtime Court performs a dance

Miss Three Oaks and River Valley Mya Thomas

Miss Bridgman Lily Clark performs a commercial during Sunday's pageant

The 2024 Miss Blossomtime Armani Collins takes her first walk

Co-Mr. Bridgman Ethan Williams takes the stage

Miss Blossomtime contestants pose onstage

Little Miss and Misters perform a dance led by Miss Blossomtime 2023 Lauren Vegter

Miss Bridgman Lily Barker graces the stage

Mr. New Buffalo Cameron Forker models swimwear during the modeling segment

2023 Miss Blossomtime Lauren Vegter takes her final onstage walk

Miss Three Oaks and River Valley Mya Thomas performs her commercial Sunday night

Miss Blossomtime contestants take the stage-1

Mr. Blossomtime contestants pose onstage at Sunday's pageant

Entertainment volunteer. She plans to attend Alabama A & M University in Huntsville, Alabama, to major in secondary education, and would also like to pursue her passion in cosmetology and aesthetics.

First runner-up Miss Coloma McKinleigh Kraemer is an 18-year-old senior at Coloma High School. The daughter of Beth and Douglas Kraemer, she plans to attend the University of Michigan to study biology and later attend graduate school to pursue a doctorate degree in Orthodontics. Second runner-up Miss Edwardsburg Kirra Halfman is the 18-year-old daughter of Crystal and Ronald Halfman. A senior at Edwardsburg High School, she's attending Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame, where she has committed to the Cheerleading Stunt team and will major in English and minor in public relations and advertising. Crowned Miss Congeniality was 17-year-old Miss Berrien Springs, Nancy Lopez-Lara. The daughter of Maria Angelica Lopez and Pedro Lopez-Belmares, she's a senior at Berrien Springs High School. Nancy plans to attend Lake Michigan College to get her associate in nursing, then plans to transfer to St Mary's College to become a nurse practitioner.

Armani, McKinleigh, Kirra and Miss Buchanan Hannah Herman were named top seven finalists along with Miss Three Oaks/River Valley Mya Thomas, Miss Bridgman Lily Barker and Miss South Haven Hannah Kaczmarek.

Mr. St. Joseph Harry Kalin was crowned the 27th Mr. Blossomtime Sunday, April 14.

"I want to thank, first of all, my parents for just being so supportive... That Ken outfit you saw, she (my mom) did an amazing job," Harry said, alluding to the beach-themed modeling segment.

Harry also thanked his grandparents and aunt and the rest of his family for their support, as well as the judges.

Harry hopes his legacy as Mr. Blossomtime will be to "help as many people as I can," citing his first-time experience with volunteering at a soup kitchen "eye-opening."

A 17-year-old junior at St Joseph High School, Harry is the son of Mitzi and Mike Kalin of St Joseph. Harry hopes to attend the University of Michigan to major in Biopsychology and Neuroscience. After his undergraduate studies, he plans to apply to Michigan medical school to become a psychiatrist. He earned second place in the adult powerlifting debut category for a natural body show, is a member of Key Club and participates in the powerlifting club.

First runner-up Ethan William is an 18-year-old senior at Bridgman High School and is the son of Amanda Drew. He plans to attend Lake Michigan College to earn a degree in exercise science and then plans to transfer to Western Michigan University to finish his degree as either a physical therapist or physician assistant. Second runner-up TJ Van is a 17-year-old junior at Lakeshore High School. The son of Jacqueline Van Horn, he plans to pursue a law degree, with a goal of becoming a United States Prosecutor or Legal career on the Federal or International level, with the emphasis on Governmental Structure. Crowned Mr Nice Guy was Sullivan Summers, a 17-year-old junior at Lakeshore High School. The son of Neysa Summers and Jake Payovich, he plans to serve in the Navy, achieve a bachelor's degree and continue onto Law School in hopes of becoming a prosecutor.

Harry, TJ, Ethan and Sullivan were named top five finalists along with Mr. South Haven Griffin Williams and Mr. Watervliet Grayson Richards.

Miss Blossomtime contestants strike a pose Monday night

Miss Benton Harbor Armani Collins is crowned Miss Blossomtime by 2023 Miss Blossomtime Lauren Vegter

Miss New Buffalo Audrey Proctor performs her commercial Sunday night

Mr. New Buffalo Cameron Forker introduces himself to the audience

Miss Three Oaks and River Valley Mya Thomas answers an onstage question

The 2024 Mr. Blossomtime Harry Kalin addresses the crowd

Miss Blossomtime contestants strike a pose

The Mr. Blossomtime finalists

The 2024Blossomtime Court poses backstage

Co-Mr. Bridgman Ryan Anderson poses in beach gear during the modeling segment

Miss New Buffalo Audrey Proctor takes the stage

Miss Bridgman Lily Barker answers an onstage question

Mr. Three Oaks and River Valley Connor Lumley wins the People's Choice Award

The 2024 Mr. Blossomtime court

Other awards included the Kings' award winners for Photogenic, which were awarded to Jaeden Meeks, Benton Harbor; Ethan Willliams, Bridgman and Paxton Daniel, Niles. Modeling awards went to Logan Hawley, Hartford; Griffin Williams, South Haven and Sullivan Summers, Stevensville. Communication awards went to Cameron Forker, New Buffalo; Logan Hawley, Hartford and DJ Freehling, Three Oaks/River Valley. The Lake Shore Masonic Lodge No. 298 Benton Harbor Scholarships were awarded to Ethan Williams, Bridgman and DJ Freehling, Three Oaks/River Valley. The Good Luck Ad winner was Gavin Morlock, Coloma. The Mr. People's Choice winner was Connor Lumley, Three Oaks/River Valley.

The Showcase of Queens award winners for Photogenic were awarded to Miss Edwardsburg, Kirra Halfman; Miss Hartford, Karley Knight and Miss New Buffalo, Audrey Proctor. Modeling awards went to Miss Brigman, Lily Barker; Miss Buchanan, Hannah Herman and Miss Spirit, Amri Kuhn. Commercial awards went to Miss Buchanan, Hannah Herman; Miss Coloma, McKinleigh Kraemer and Miss Three Oaks/River Valley, Mya Thomas. The princess program scholarship winners were Miss Bridgman, Lily Barker and Miss Lawrence, Kennedi Klock.

Judges for the Mr. Blossomtime pageant were Andrew Skipper, Marissa Claxton, and Shane Blair.

Judges for the Showcase of Queens pageant were Barbara Campbell, Hunter Ackerman, and Maria Moen.

Judges for the Miss Blossomtime pageant were Jim Campbell, Brandy Cox, and Bret McAtee.

The theme of this year's pageant was "Blossomtime…Where Every Day is a Holiday." Former Miss Blossomtime 1988, Lanie Lu Von Behren and the Lady of the Lake Athletic Director, Phil McDonald emceed both pageants.

The Acorn to present Art Attack Launch Party

The Acorn will celebrate the kickoff of Art Attack weekend in with "Faces of Harbor Country" at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 25, that will feature live portrait creations, with notable local models, appetizers, a cash bar and live music with Patti Shaffner and Buddy Pearson.

Influencers will be sitting for portraits that will come to life before your eyes during this live portrait session held as part of the Launch Party for Art Attack Weekend.

Allen and Lynn Turner, Suzanna Bierwirth, Zach Hackett, Bridget Verdun and Abby Voss and Travis Worden each touch our community through the work they do and the energy they bring to the region. Watch as talented artists David Baker, Eric Bradford, Lea Bult, Jessica Hightower and Zech Ray capture the spirit of these notable models.

Patti Shaffner performs a wide variety of musical styles including folk, blues, jazz, theater and improvisational singing with ease. Soon after schooling, Buddy Pearson immersed in the local and Chicago jazz scene and continues to share the stage with heavy hitter players to this day.

David Baker is a visual artist who specializes in poetic landscape painting, much of it done en plein air. He recently retired as art professor Emeritus from Southwestern Michigan College and still teaches a bit at Ox-Bow School of Art and at the Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Eric Bradford has always kept a special place for portrait painting as he's come through many phases of art and life that include realism to cartooning, murals to digital media, philosophical to reason, all in any number of social, political or work environments and amidst the great technology revolution.

Lea Bult has worked with numerous arts organizations, including Gallery Project - Detroit, the Ann Arbor Art Center, and the Greatmore Studios in Cape Town, South Africa. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, and has been the recipient of several awards including a MacDowell Fellowship. Lea was an art teacher at SMC and the Krasl Art Center for many years, and currently works as a designer for Colson Group.

With a passion for celebrating the beauty and diversity of people of color, the artwork of Benton Harbor artist Jessica Hightower is all about making a statement. Inspired by everything from African textiles to comic books, her paintings burst with energy and personality.

Zech Ray is a realist artist living in Southwest Michigan, who works in oils and watercolors, primarily focused on his life experiences and the people and places around which he lives. Zech was featured in Southwest Art Magazine's '21 Under 31' issue in September 2018. He also placed first in the watercolor category of the Box Factory for the Arts 2021 MAAC show.

Kenjji is an award-winning artist, who has created comics and caricatures independently for more than 20 years. His illustrations have appeared in the New York Times, Orlando Wired magazine and other publications. As a freelance artist he has a client list that includes MTV, Absolut Vodka, The Detroit Lions and Michigan National Bank.

Lynn Turner has served on the board of directors of the Aids Foundation of Chicago and Child Abuse Prevention Services and is currently a member of the board of directors of Metropolitan Family Services. Allen Turner is a Three Oaks resident and the former board chair at The Museum of Contemporary Art, The Goodman Theatre and Columbia College. He is also a playwright, musician and author of the Three Oaks sesquicentennial play, "Three Oaks Against The World."

Suzanna Bierwirth is the owner of Goods & Heroes, a lifestyle store in Three Oaks. She grew up in Germany, is a photographer and designer by training and spent years working as a creative director in the advertising and marketing industry living in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angelea and NYC. Zach Hackett is the owner of the Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks. Originally from Florida, Zach and his wife Christina, along with their two children are proud to continue the tradition of bringing film, music and art to the community.

Seeing as how people energize her, it's not surprising that Bridget Verdun's work centers around creating meaningful connections. Whether that's been her work professionally in staffing and search, through her art gallery in Three Oaks, where she connected buyers with artists for 15 years, or through Occasionally Speaking, her line of greeting cards that have connected more than 750,000 people by sending words of encouragement, comfort, inspiration and joy, Verdun is a connector at heart.

Travis Worden and Abby Voss, a gay man and a queer woman, a local and a transplant, wanted to bring a celebratory festival to the already well-established queer community of Harbor Country and beyond. Travis and Abby focus on highlighting LGBTQIA+ artists, musicians, performers, local businesses and safe spaces during an annual week of celebration, love and visibility, while putting money back into local queer hands and supporting businesses

Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are available at www.acornlive.org. General Admission tickets are $25 in advance and $30 the day of the show. Limited Reserved Seating tickets are $50 in advance and $55 the day of the show. Seating is limited. — STAFF REPORTS

SNAKE EYES FOR ALLEGED SLOT MACHINE PREDATOR

Charges have been filed against a man accused of making a habit out of stealing credits belonging to other people on slot machines at Blue Chip Casino.

Gabriel French, 39, is charged in La Porte Superior Court 4 with Level 6 felony cheating at gambling.

According to court documents, the charges were filed after French was escorted out of the Michigan City casino on several occasions for stealing credits from slot machine players over a recent two month period.

He was also evicted from the casino for 72 hours after each of those alleged incidents.

According to authorities, the South Bend man is known as a "Scooper," who walks around the casino floor looking for credits left in slot machines by people who walked away from them momentarily or for extended periods.

Specifically, he's charged with cashing out just over $175 dollars in credits from a slot machine Feb. 17.

He failed in his attempt, though, to redeem the cash voucher at a kiosk when recognized by casino security, which placed the voucher into a safe until it could be returned to its rightful owner, according to court documents. — STAN MADDUX

NEW BUFFALO LIBRARY PROGRAM TO LOOK AT WHAT IS ART (AND WHAT ISN'T)

Lake Michigan College Art Lecturer Susan Wilczak will explore what makes a painting or a sculpture art in a free program at the New Buffalo Township Library at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 23.

Sponsored by the Friends of the New Buffalo Library, the program will focus especially on modern and contemporary work.

Wilczak will discuss the definition of art and its purpose in society, and will examine the various categories of art, where it is seen, how it is made and the role of the artist.

The library is located at 33 N. Thompson Street in downtown New Buffalo. — STAFF REPORTS

HOROSCOPE

APRIL 18-24, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

Situations in which you mix friends and finances could get dicey now. Be aware that even though there may be difficult financial arrangements to work out, it doesn't mean you should cut and run. Don't take the easy way out. You will find a better way. Stay the course and solidify commitments.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

It is important you follow your inner guide and do things that have a greater reward spiritually. When you stay true to yourself you draw in the right people and connections. Look for people that are authentic and tell the truth no matter how ugly that truth is. Good friends will be made now.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

You will be doing a lot of work from behind the scenes this week. It is important you listen and follow a higher purpose when dealing with people. You may need to be that shoulder to lean on but there is a fine line between enabling and helping. Be supportive but don't lose yourself.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

If you need to leave, do it with grace. This is not the time to desert your post. Put in the proper paper work and get your reassignment. Understand that how you end things speaks a great deal to your image and sets the tone for the possibility of future connections. Be wise.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

Be the first one to apologize when it comes to dealing with people. Choose to be the bigger person and make moves towards a higher purpose and connection. Become that firm foundation and place of refuge for others. You are being forced to take the lead this week and who has time for tyranny?

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

You have a knack for saying what people need to hear, in the best way possible. Not everyone can do that with the dignity and patience that you do, but don't push it. This is the time for you to take the high road. Let people figure it out on their own while, you enjoy some free time.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

The energy coming your way this week has the potential to bring an unusual financial break. This is the break you've been hoping for. There is some effort you will have to put in before you will reap all the full benefits but it will be worth it. Know when to ask for help and it will be there.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

There are immovable forces and then there is Scorpio. Once you set your mind to something you rarely get off course. But sometimes you do get knocked off course and just when you enter those troubled waters; enter the dove. Look for that ray of hope, those signs of peace and they will appear.

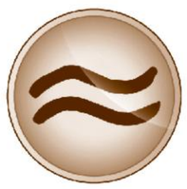
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

Just when you think the worst has happened, you will be blessed with guidance and a higher awareness of the situation. Know that the right people will be in place, at the right time. So, don't get discouraged or feel like no one is reaching out, it could be the battery on your phone.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

The energy coming your way this week could have a dramatic affect in your love life or situation with children. This is the time to stay calm when dealing with turbulence causing individuals. Don't get caught up in the whirlwind or the he said she said stuff. Stay true to your word and all will work out.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



It is time to show your strength and be that rock of Gibraltar. No matter how much someone or something pushes you, be unmovable. Stay true to your goals and family. This is not the time to take the easy way out. When you stand firm, the higher path will present itself.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

The moon is calling you to journey this week, to step out of your comfort zone and learn something new about life. This is not the time to sit quietly. Get out and explore. Put yourself in situations you generally shy away from and give it all you got. Shoot for the moon and you'll land in the stars.

What I like to drink most is wine that belongs to others.
— Diogenes the Dog

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Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

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8								
				4				
6	9				4			
7					2			
	8			3		4	6	7
5	4			7	6		3	
3						6		2
9	7			8			5	

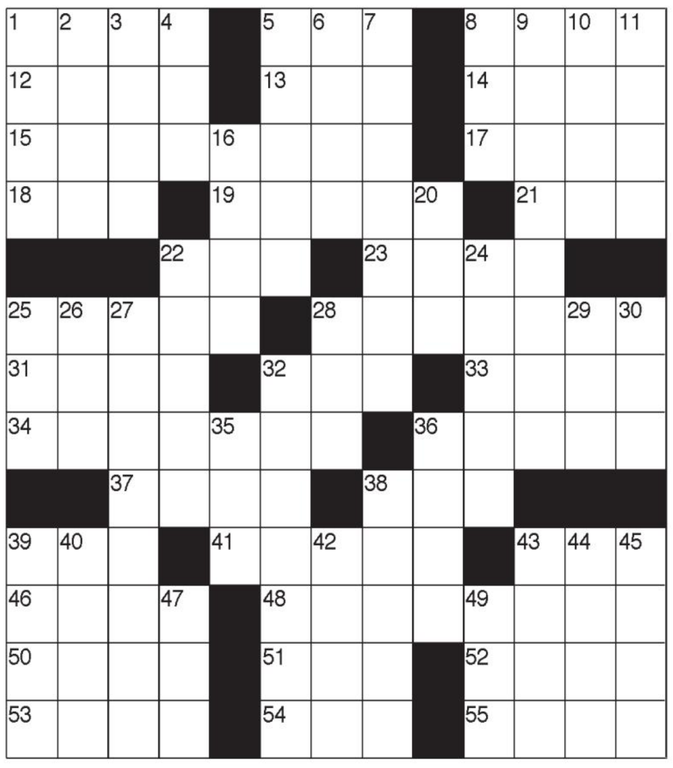
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Indian cuckoo
5 Amer. College of Physicians (abbr.)
8 Middle Eastern abbess
12 "Dies ____"
13 Guido's note (2 words)
14 Cat's cry
15 Extremely happy
17 Object of affection
18 Latitude (abbr.)
19 Open
21 Delirium tremens (abbr.)
22 Master of Landscape Architecture (abbr.)
23 Deteriorate
25 Sergeant fish
28 Family relative
31 Malay canoe
32 Pharmaceutical Chemist (abbr.)
33 Sicilian resort
34 Shrivel
36 Tacoma's sound
37 Rhine tributary
38 Garnet
39 Health maintenance organization (abbr.)
41 Rhone tributary
43 War Shipping Admin. (abbr.)
46 Brand name in electronics
48 Old World bird
50 Bird
51 Associate in Electrical Technology (abbr.)
52 Pen name of Charles Lamb
53 Father (Fr.)
54 Sp. article
55 Quintillionth (pref.)

DOWN

1 German port
2 Killer whale
3 Asia
4 Permit
5 Sicilian volcano
6 Paper fastener
7 Peaceful
8 Friend (Fr.)
9 Interfering
10 Dubious
11 Boring tools
16 Great (Ger.)
20 Snatch
22 Cat's cry
24 Lower intestines
25 Certified Public Accountant (abbr.)
26 Leftover table scrap
27 Sponge
28 Coy
29 Compass direction
30 Pistol
32 Lexical
35 Public Health Service (abbr.)
36 Noble
38 Small flies
39 Lock
40 Buffoon
42 Great Barrier island
43 Flag
44 Tizzy
45 Hermitic language
47 Dread
49 Grassland



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Space heater possible cause of house fire

BY STAN MADDUX

A fire that destroyed a house in northern La Porte County might have something to do with a space heater.

Zach Rasiuk, chief of the Kankakee Township Volunteer Fire Department, said the plugged-in space heater was beside an underground well pump, which was in the area of the residence where the fire started judging by the damage.

"That's where most of the charring was," he said-

He said the investigation with help from the Indiana State Fire Marshal's Office was continuing.

Nobody was home about 9 a.m. Thursday, April 11, when the fire broke out on Fail Road just north of U.S. 20.

According to La Porte County Police, the owner, Daniel Adams, told investigators he was out running errands and left about 15 minutes before firefighters were called.

There was heavy smoke billowing from the single-story ranch home, along with flames shooting up from the roof.

His wife, Nicole Adams, said they have lived there for just over 25 years.

Mrs. Adams said she was at her job as a dietician at Washington Park Zoo in Michigan City and rushed home when notified on her phone by some friends about the blaze.

She watched in disbelief and sadness as firefighters fought a losing battle to save the home.

Her four dogs and a cat made it out safely.

"It's total devastation. All of my kids' childhood memories. We raised our family there. At least the animals are out," she said.

She said her husband was at a shop having a tire changed on a skid steer when he also learned about the fire on his phone.

Adams said all of her children are away in college except for her son, who lives in Florida.

There are horses on the property but they were in a building far enough away not to be threatened by the fire.

Adams said she and her husband bought the house just before getting married in 1999.

"It's our first home," she said, with her voice cracking.

Rasiuk said there was not much left of the structure, with portions having to be knocked down as a safety precaution while putting out hotspots a few hours after the blaze started.

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DEATH NOTICES

THREE OAKS – Russell E. Holub, 93, of Three Oaks, died Sunday, April 14, 2024. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks.

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Peace Consignment welcomes treasure seekers near and far

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

After a lifetime of indulging in searching for items that are of the out-of-the-ordinary variety, Donna Messinger has opened Peace Consignment in New Buffalo.

Growing up, she and her sister frequented garage sales with their mother.

Years later, she became a consignor, and would sell her items online.

"I loved to do it because I didn't have to have a full-time job - I could do it at my leisure," Messinger said.

After giving her treasures to consignment shops, Messinger said she was ready to be the one who received them.

"I would drive to other consignment shops and take my inventory in there and when this space became available, I said, 'I want to do this myself, I want to be the person people bring their stuff to," she said.

Peace Consignment is chock full of a variety of items for the home, from knick-knacks to vintage Tupperware and pie racks, as well as men's and women's clothing, children's toys and books and jewelry.

Customers may notice new items every time they come in, as Messinger said she replaces items that have been sold with something else.

"Every time you come in, you see something different and that's the way people like to come into these kinds of shops - like looking for something they don't really need but have to have," she said.

Messinger even has some of her own creations on display: wooden boards that have sayings on them such as "Welcome to the Lake" and "You Had Me At Merlot," with "New Buffalo" painted over "Lake" and "Merlot."

Despite just opening late last month, the store is already full of the inventory that Messinger would take to consignors. Currently, she's accepting clothing, although she may be accepting furniture pieces down the line. Interested consigners can bring in 15 pieces of clean or gently used clothing on a hanger at a time. Messinger will inspect the items, selecting which ones she wants to sell. When an item gets sold, consignors will receive 40% of the payment.

Messinger currently has two consignors. Due to them not wanting to receive money from the purchase of their items, Messinger said she's giving those sales to the organization of their choice, like a donation in their name.

"I don't feel comfortable just keeping the money, so I'm going to donate it," she said.

It's important to Messinger that items at Peace Consignment are sold at an affordable price. Keeping the business open year-round is also her goal, as she wants to draw in the tourist as well as local crowd.

Opening the store has been a family affair. Present at its grand opening Thursday, April 11, were her sister, Diane Morris, from Wabash, Indiana, who had also framed all the art on the walls from her store there; her mom, Norma McVicker and two family friends.

Her two sons have been helping haul items in and have gotten a taste of the retail world, while her husband, who's "totally behind this," has also been unloading items.

"All this stuff used to be in our house - it had to be someplace - so he's very happy it's here now," Messinger said.

Peace Consignment is located 17656 B Red Arrow Highway in New Buffalo. Current hours of operation are every day except Tuesday and Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Donna Messinger poses by shelves of knick knacks

Various styles of clothing fill Peace Consignment

Mom Norma Mcvicker, sister Diane Morris and family friends Bessie Walton and Phyllis Kiefaber are there on opening day

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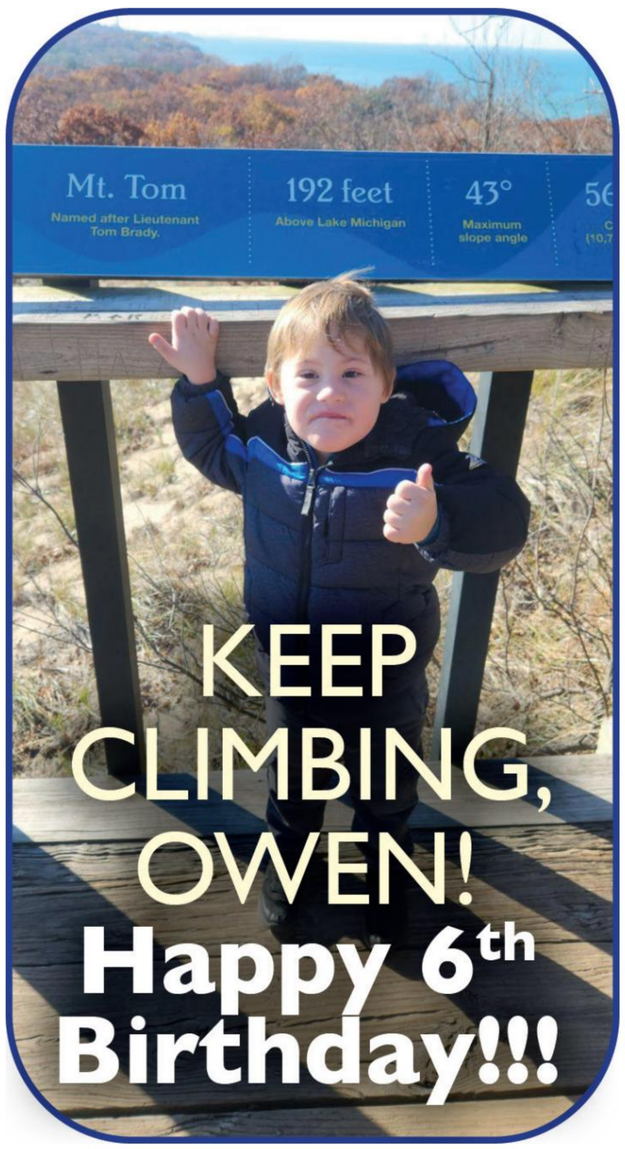

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